

Barb's BookSpot: Episode 6
Seeing Yourself in a Book
November, 2015

***Little Penguin Gets the Hiccups* by Tadgh Bentley**

Published by Balzer & Bray, a division of HarperCollins, 2015.

Little Penguin has a problem; he has the hiccups. I think everyone can identify and laugh along as Little Penguin tries all sorts of home remedies and antics to try to cure them. When nothing works, Little Penguin speaks directly to the reader, saying, "You need to scare me." The illustrations in this book are engaging and funny, and Little Penguin's eyes and body language really tell the tale. The frustration will be recognized by anyone who has had a similar struggle, and the text encourages reader expression and audience participation. The illustrations on the endpapers add before and after context, extending the story to allow readers to see what came before and predict what might happen next.

***I'm New Here* by Anne Sibley O'Brien**

Published by Charlesbridge, 2015.

Many can identify with the experience of being "the new kid." Moving household, starting a new school, making new friends or playing a new game for the first time – imagine how much more difficult this might be for someone from another country. In this book, three children speak of their struggles and fears, trying to understand the language, decode writing that is very different and overcome shyness to find a place to fit in without making mistakes or feeling awkward. The text is simple and focused, highlighting each individual as they face the problem, share feelings, and then find the beginnings of a solution. There will be many ways for readers to identify with these characters and finding the common ground will help with understanding and empathy for even the youngest listeners.

***The Goodbye Book* by Todd Parr**

Published by Megan Tingley Books, a division of Little Brown and Company, 2015.

With short, simple text and bold, clear illustrations, Todd Parr uses little fish to lead readers through the stages of loss. When green fish disappears from the bowl, goldfish shows sadness, anger, confusion, and isolation. We see goldfish try to cope through distractions, reluctance to talk, trying to stop thinking about it. But little by little positive memories, sharing, and artistic expression allow goldfish to move on. This story can be shared with even the very young, but it will resonate with much older listeners as well. Words such as death, loss, grief, are never used; there is no jargon, no patronization, and no didactic overtone. This book resonates simply and elegantly, because we all know that, "It's hard to say goodbye to someone."

